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ABSTRACT

Presenting a broad view of education in Thailand, the booklet is arranged into 10 parts. General background information is provided in the first part. Part 2 gives a brief history of Thai education, touching upon the influences of Thai kings and the Buddhist temples. Part 3 briefly describes the legislative structures underlying Thailand's educational system. The educational objectives included in the National Education Scheme of 1977 are listed in part 4. Also included is a discussion on the arrangement of the schools and general education system. The new focus of curriculum at the primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels on making a living instead of pursuing the next level of education is addressed in part 5. Part 6 provides a report on Thailand's administrative system at the central, provincial, and local levels, with brief sections on the roles of various ministries. Part 7 discusses the organizational arrangement of the Ministry of Education. A report on Thailand's Five Year Development Plan (1977-1981) is given in part 8. Part 9 presents data concerning current educational development. The future of educational development is dealt with in part 10. The booklet includes a number of charts and tables illustrating the administrative structure and organization of the educational system, enrollment statistics for formal and non-formal programs; and statistics concerning Thailand's educational budget. (LH)

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THAI EDUCATION IN BRIEF

1982

Educational Planning Division

Office of the Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Education

Bangkok, Thailand.

May 1983

SP 014 967

FOREWORD

"Thai Education in Brief" is the publication summarizes the essential of Thai educational system, initiated by the Educational Planning Division.

The main purpose of this booklet is to give a broad idea and render better understanding to the Thai Education. Brief as it is, the content of this book can not go into detailes, but we hope that it will be of some use to various institutions and people concerned.

Educational Planning Division
Office of the permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education.

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A. GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.	Location	Thailand is situated in the Indochinese Peninsula of Southeast Asia. On the North it is bounded by Laos and Burma, on the West by Burma, on the South by Malaysia, and on the East by Kampuchea and Laos.
2.	Area	513,115 Square Kilometers
3.	Population	47.5 million (1982)
	Growth rate	1.95 per year
	Population of Bangkok Metropolis	5.2 million (1981)
4.	Gross Domestic Products	30,426 millions (U.S. dollars: 1979)
5.	Per Capita income	608 U.S. dollars (1980)
6.	Currency	Baht (23 baht/U.S. dollar)
7.	Form of Government	Constitutional Monarchy
	Number of Ministries	14
	Number of provinces	73
	Number of districts	675

	Number of sub-districts (Tambon)	5,883
	Number of villages	52,835
	Number of municipalities	236
8.	Literacy rate	86 % (10 years and older)
9.	Religions by proportion	
	Buddhists	95.24 %
	Muslims	4.03 %
	Christians	0.60 %
	Others	0.13 %
10.	Museums	33
11.	National library	6
12.	Planetarium	1

B. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THAI EDUCATION

Being under no colonial rule at any time in its long history, Thailand has developed a kind of education that is peculiar to its own situations reflecting the spirit of freedom, self-reliance, and flexibility.

Earlier in the process of nation-building, the Buddhist temples were the pillars in education, playing the most significant role in

providing educational expeiences, moral, vocational, intellectual, art, as well as self-defence to Thai youth. We often read of a young nobleman in ancient times seeking knowledge in military affairs from venerable abbots of the temples.

Through the wisdom of their kings, ever since the times of King Ramkamhaeng the Great (1279-1300), the Thai people have always had some form of learning from the temples, and later on from the schools. During the long reigh of King Rama V (King Chulalongkorn the Great), close associations with foreign countries and foreign people were developed, King Chulalongkorn visited Europe twice. Consequently, of their own free will, the Thai people adopted many new concepts in education from western countries, particularly Europe. Schools in a modern sense were established at the time; and from that time on, Thai scholars students and officials have travelled to the West, and brought home with them foreign educational thoughts and practices. Many of these ideas were adapted for use in the Thai education system. It is noteworthy that flexibility characterizes the Thai way of life since the very beginning, even at the time when King Ramkamhaeng created the Thai alphabet in 1283 through adaptation of the Mon and the Khmer scripts. Furthermore, learning of foreign languages,

especially English, come to be recognized as an important element in education, starting from the reign of King Chulalongkorn. Looking back, it is realized that it has been a great adventure in education for the Thai people, and they have done rather well. As a consequence, directly or indirectly, their freedom and independence have been preserved.

It has been said on many occasions that we must look back in order to look forward. In the same manner and spirit as our forefathers have developed, changed, and modified, so must we of the present generation reform, change and grow.

C. LEGISLATIVE BASES

At present (1982), the organizational set up and the operational guidelines are based, inter alia, on the Constitution (1978), the National Education Scheme (1977), the Compulsory Education Act (1980), the Private Schools Act (1975), the Teachers Act (1980), and several other ministerial ane departmental rules and regulations issued to serve particular purposes.

Generally speaking, the National Education Scheme is the focal basis in administering educational system.

D. THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SCHEME 1977

1. Educational Objectives

(1) To promote respect for one's own and other's rights and duties; discipline; respect for and abiding of the law, religion and moral principles.

(2) To promote understanding of and arouse enthusiasm in having a part in the governing of the country under democratic constitutional monarchy, witn unfailing allegiance to the nation, religion and monarch.

(3) To inculcate a sense of reponsibility for the nation, the community, the family and oneself.

(4) To realize the collective sense of being Thai and being a part of humanity; to have national pride; to bear in mind national security; and to have a say in the protecting of the country.

(5) To uphold equality, integrity, and justice.

(6) To develop good personality, good health and hygiene, both mental and physical.

(7) To encourage diligence, professional abilities, as well as legitimate co-operation in all enterprises.

(8) To develop a sense of communication, mutual under standing and co-operation; search for truth; creativeness; ability to solve problems and conflicts by intelligent; rational and peaceful means.

(9) To promote knowledge, understanding and appreciation of sciences, art, culture, nature, environment and resources to the nation.

2. Educational System

There are four levels of education: - pre-school education, primary education, secondary education and higher education (see Chart 1)

Pre-school education aims at preparing the child before compulsory education, laying a suitable foundation for him to go on to the next stage of his education. Education at this level may be arranged as formal or out-of-school education. It may take the form of a nursery home, a child centre and in certain cases a class for small children or a kindergarten.

Primary education aims at providing the learner with basic knowledge and skills, teaching him how to read and write and do arithmetic, enabling him to be a good citizen under democratic constitutional monarchy.

Secondary education follows elementary education and aims at providing the learner with knowledge and working skills suitable to his age, needs, interest and aptitude. Each individual will then be able to comprehend and select work which will be useful both to himself and to society.

There are two levels of secondary education, i.e. lower secondary and upper secondary education. At the lower level, the learner will choose from a wide range of subjects a group of subjects, both academic and vocational, according to his aptitude and interest, while at the upper level he will pay more attention to a group of subjects that will eventually become his line of future employment.

Higher education follows upper secondary education, and aims at cultivating and developing his intellect and ideas for academic advancement. It also aims at creating a task-force at higher academic and vocational levels for deelopment of the country. At the same time, it aims at endowing him with high morals, ethics, knowledge and appreciation of art and culture. This will enable him to live a life valuable to other individuals, society and finally the nation.

Higher education may take the form of a college, a university or a special institute. The teaching method may be in diverse forms to such an extent that the learner need not attend the institute enrolled.

As for the non-formal education system, the responsibility is to provide education for the out-of-school and the underprivileged population in order to give people of all ages opportunities to study and improve their occupations and living conditions.

3. School System

Based on the educational system above mentioned, the formal or schooling system is developed as illustrated in Chart 2.

At the pre-primary level, the structure of school system is flexible, i.e., one year for pre-primary or two years for kindergarten. Approximate age of entry is 3-4 years old.

The primary education requires six years to complete. It is compulsory and free of charge. All children at the age of six are required, by law, to attend primary school until the age of fifteen, or ortherwise complete grade six, before they may leave school system.

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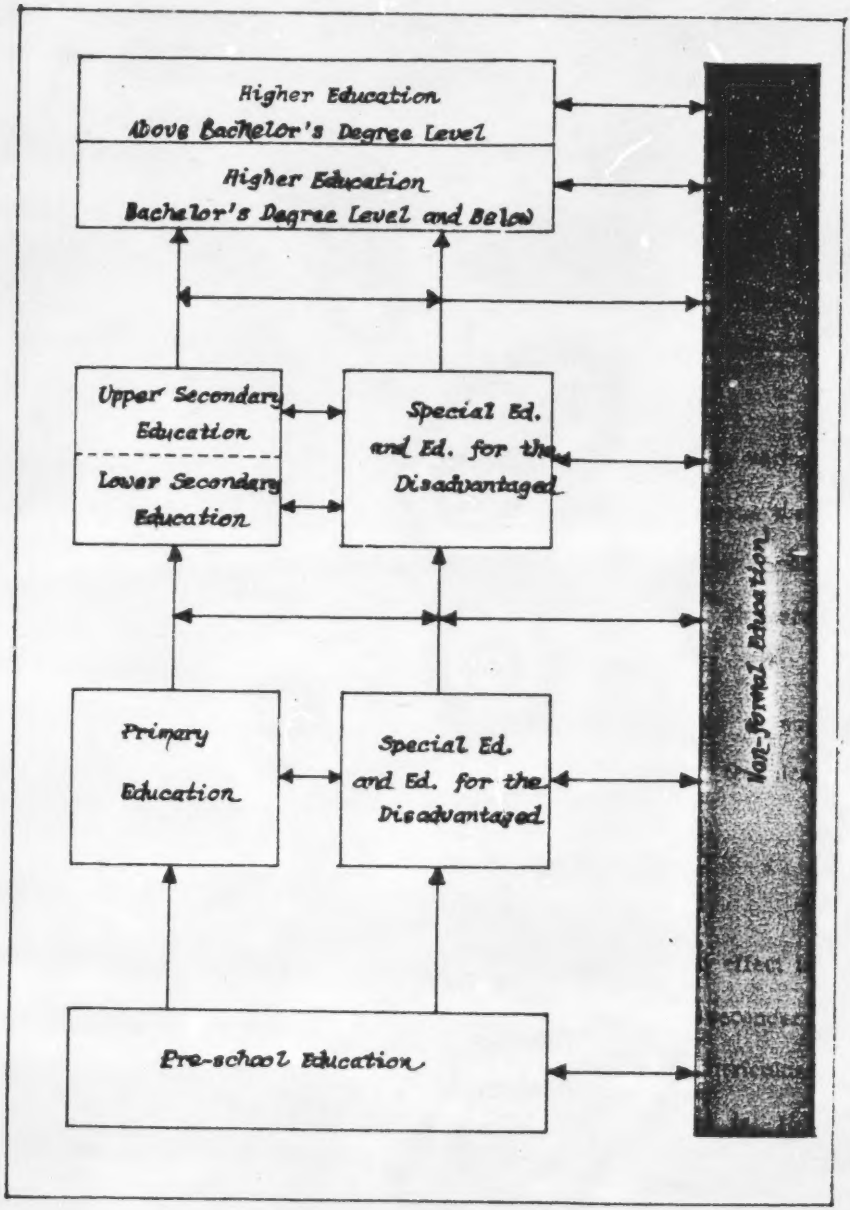
Chart I EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM 1977



Secondary education is divided into two levels: lower secondary and upper secondary education, each of which requires three years to complete. At the upper secondary level, a student may choose either academic oriented, or vocation-oriented program, suitable to his aptitude and interest. A student may leave school system, if he so desires, after completing grade nine at the lower secondary level, and grade twelve at the upper secondary level.

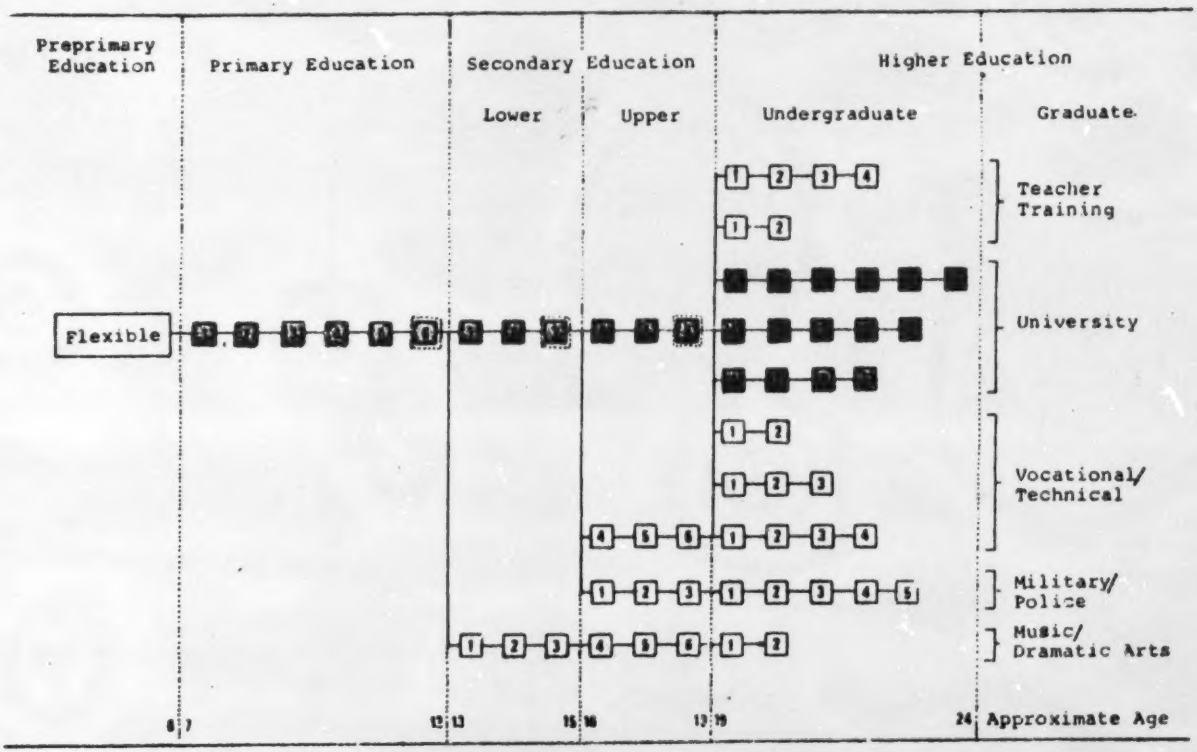
The school system at higher education is arranged in various forms. In general, upper secondary school graduates can persue their higher education by taking entrance examination. General university programs take four years to complete, except Architecture (5 years) and Medical science (6 years).

There are several specific school system modified to suit particular purposes of training, e.g., teacher training, technical education, music and drama, and military and police.

E. SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Since the new educational system has been put into effect in 1978, the school curricula, particularly at the primary and secondary levels, have to be changed accordingly. The emphasis of the curriculum at each level has been placed on self-completion tnat is, the students are provided with learning experiences such that they are

Chart II STRUCTURE OF PRESENT SCHOOL SYSTEM



Remark: ⊡ Terminal Grade

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prepared for making a decent living instead of pursuing to the next level of education.

1. Primary Curriculum 1978

This curriculum has been developed in accordance with the new school system of 1977. It aims at inculcating the learners basic knowledge and skills as stated in the National Education Scheme.

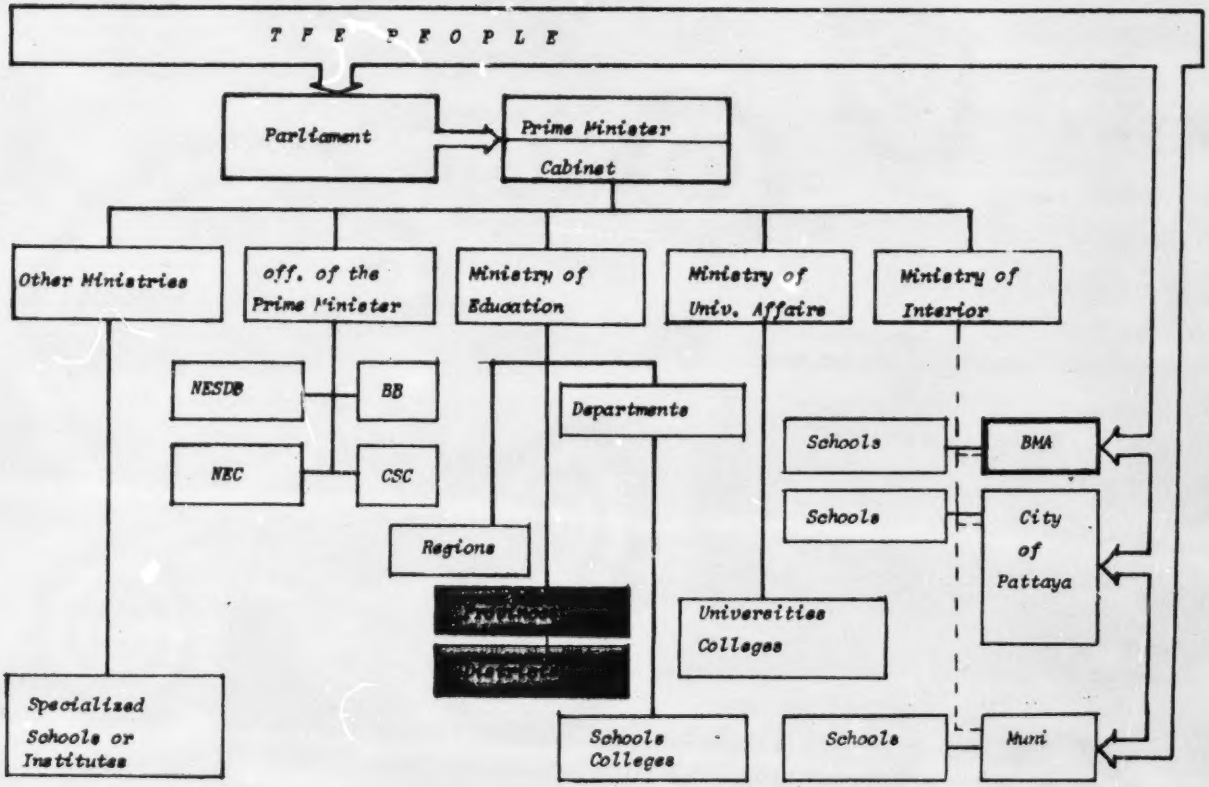
There are five groups of learning experiences, namely, basic skills (language and arithmetic) life experience (social studies, environmental and health education), character education (ethics, arts, and physical education), work experience (prevocation orientation), and special group which arranged for students at grade five and six (either English for daily life or vocational orientation).

Legally speaking, this curriculum requires six years; 200 days (40 weeks) per year.

2. Lower Secondary Curriculum

The major objectives of lower secondary school curriculum are to instill knowledge, skills, and appropriate attitudes towards earning a living. This curriculum is composed of five groups of learning experiences. They are: language (Thai and foreign), science and

Chart III ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATION



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educational system ranging from pre-primary education to colleges at post-secondary level, while the Ministry of University Affairs is in charge of education at the tertiary level. As there is some overlapping of authority among these ministries, some further description of their different functions with respects to education will be given.

The Office of the Prime Minister

Within the Prime Minister's Office, there is one organization which solely concerns with administering education, and various other organizations part of whose functions are related to the educational system. In the former category falls the National Education Commission (NEC), and in the latter category fall the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), the Budget Bureau (B.B) and the Civil Service Commission (C.S.C.)

The functions of the NESDB, the B.B, and the C.S.C. are the same for education as they are for other ministries. That is, preparing plans, evaluating and approving budget, and dealing with all matters of staff administration respectively.

The NEC is the organization responsible for the overall co-ordination of planning, and for ensuring that the activities in

different parts of the educational system are consistent with each other. In addition to the above functions, it also carries out research of general interest, usually at the request of other agencies. Finally, the NEC has to report to the Cabinet on serious educational problems and make recommendations on the reorganization of the educational system or on the development of new policies to solve these problems.

The Ministry of Interior

In 1968 authority for most public primary scoools in municipal areas was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the municipalities. The Ministry of Interior's main function was in the allocation of subsidies to municipalities for primary education, including the primary schools unqer the resposibilities of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and the City of Pattaya.

The Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is fully responsible for all types of education, arts, culture, and religious affairs. This Ministry also takes care of curriculum under the university level and non-formal education. Pre-primary and most of primary education are also under the responsibilties of the Ministry. On top of these, post-secondary

programmes in technical institutes, the Institute of Technology and Vocational Education, and teacher training colleges are also under the Ministry's responsibilities.

The administration of teaching personnel and certain type of educational administrators is liable to the Teacher Civil Service Commission, under the Ministry's jurisdiction.

In addition, there is a departmental level committee, the Private Education Commission, looking after private education at primary and secondary levels.

The Ministry of University Affairs

Established in 1972, the Ministry of University Affairs is responsible for the administration of government university and overseeing private colleges. The Ministry serves as co-ordinator between universities and the government. Top-level policy making and planning, setting the standard of curriculum and university personnel administration, and recommendation of budget allocations are among the functions of this Office.

As regards private colleges, the government operation over them emphasizes two aspects, namely the control of policy and academic standards.

Note that, there are still several other organizations, which run a variety of educational institutions for their specific purposes. For example, the Ministry of Defense (Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School, Military Technical Training School, Royal Military Academy), the Ministry of Agiculture and Cooperatives, the Ministry of Communications, and the Ministry of Public Health.

2. Provincial Administration

Provincial administration of education is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. There are two forms of arrangement, that is, province and district. Administrative authorities are delegated to the governor at the provincial level and to the district officer (sheriff) at the district level. In each province, there is an educational office, headed by the provincial education officer responsible for educational matters delegated from central agencies. Follow the same pattern, in each district there is an educational office, headed by the district education officer, responsible for educational administration within the district boundary

3. Local Administration

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, the City of Pattaya, and the Municipalities have their own administrative channels for

education under their respective jurisdiction. The educational institutions operated by these agencies are at the pre-primary and primary levels. At present, there are 113 municipalities throughout the Kingdom.

G. ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education has been officially established since 1892, by upgrading the then Department of Education (established in 1875), to be responsible to education of the Country. At the early stage of its establishment (1887), there were 34 schools, 81 teachers, and 1994 students.

Over the long process of development, education under the Ministry's jurisdiction has been considerably expanded. As a consequence, the Ministry of Education at the present time has to organize its administrative structure in such a way that educational matters are effectively managed.

1. Central Administration

There are 14 departments under the Ministry's jurisdiction, each of which has its own specific functions. Half of these departments are either totally or partially assigned to operate or

control certain types of schools, college. or institutes. The other three departments (Fine arts, Religious Affairs. and Cultural Affairs) are responsible for fine arts, religious, and culture respectively. School curriculum, textbook production, and test and measurement of students achievement are under the Department of Educational Curriculum and Instruction Development, while teaching personnel matters are taken care of by the teacher Civil Service Commission.

The Office of the Permanent Secretary is the central coordinating agency of the Ministry. (See chart IV)

Besides those 14 departments mentioned, the central administration of education also include 12 educational regions. The educational regions was set up for the purpose of impoving the education in the rural and to better adapt education to the local needs as well as to geographical, occupational and cultural backgrounds. The 12 educational regions are illustrated in figure 1

2. Local Administration

Within rhe framework of local administration of education, the provincial educational office is expected not only to comply with the assigned roles and functions in providing educational services, but

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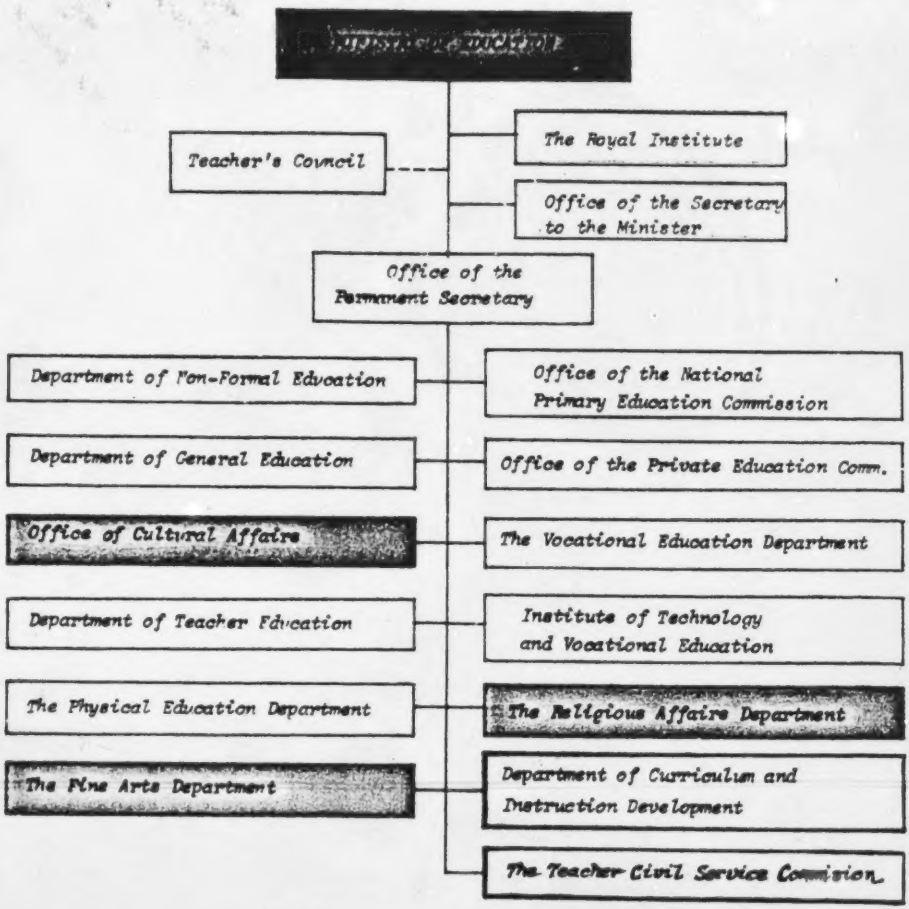
Chart IV. ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION


Teacher's Council
The Royal Institute
Office of the Secretary to the Minister
Office of the Permanent Secretary
Department of Non-Formal Education
Office of the National Primary Education Commission
Department of General Education
Office of the Private Education Comm.
Office of Cultural Affairs
The Vocational Education Department
Department of Teacher Education
Institute of Technology and Vocational Education
The Physical Education Department
The Religious Affairs Department
The Fine Arts Department
Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development
The Teacher Civil Service Commision

also to coordinate with other agencies at the province in achieve rural development.

The head of the provincial education office is the provincial education officer, appointed and assigned by the Ministry of Education.

H. EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (1977–1981)

The implementation of the Fourth Five Year Plan (1977–1981) has come to an end in 1981. The policies used as development guidelines are as follows.

1. To unify the administration system
2. To improve the educational system, so that it serves the national economic and social development policies more effectively.
3. To improve the quality of education at all levels.
4. To promote equality of educational opportunity
5. To improve teaching/learning process and content
6. To promote non–formal education.

However, in implementing this plan, there are several crucial problems that urgently need to be solved. For example equality of educational opportunity, mobilization of educational resources, responsibility of private sector, and equality of education.

I. SOME ASPECTS OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

1. Number of Institutions, Enrollment, and Students

In 1981, there are approximately 36,000 schools, colleges, and institutes operating formal education activities throughout the country. Approximately 33,400 institutions are operated by government agencies, while the other 2,600 institutions are run by private sector.

There are about 500,000 teachers and staff working in these institutions ; approximately 55,800 are in private sector, the rest are in public sector.

Slightly over 10 million students are enrolled in all levels of educational institutions ; about 1.4 million are in private sector and 8.6 million are in public sector.

Table 1 Number of Schools/Institutes, Teachers, and students in Formal School system 1981

Organizations	Number of Schools/ Institutes	Number of Teachers	Number of Students
1. Ministry of Education	35,013	459,596	9,482,708
1.1 Public	32,441	405,340	8,146,761
1.2 Private	2,572	54,256	1,335,947
2. State University	33	17,232	131,771
2.1 University	10	13,155	75,979
2.2 Private College	11	1,508	32,170
2.3 Institutes	2 (3)	1,623	10,877
2.4 Demonstration Schools	10	946	12,745
3. Bangkok Metropolitan Administration	413	12,380	217,794
4. Municipalities and City of Pattaya	446	10,641	224,950
5. Border Patrol Police	109	418	8,659
Total	36,014	500,267	10,065,882

Note : 1. Not include data from other ministries and open university.

2. Number in parentheses indicates number campuses.

2. Non-Formal Education Programs

During the past few years non-formal education has been given more and more attention. Consequently, various forms of non-formal education programs are now available, so as to open up a wider range of opportunity for the learners.

Form the data in 1980, there are totally 11,650 non-formal education institutions operated by about 58,000 staffs for approximately 1.3 million learners.

The major portion of this responsibility is shared by the Ministry of Education.

Table 2 Number of Institutions, Teachers, and Learners Enrolled in Non-formal Education Programs in 1980

Organization	Number of Institutions	Number of Teachers	Number of Learners
1. Ministry of Education	11,628	57,174	1,206,715
1.1 Dept. of Non-formal Ed.	4,780	23,341	450,257
1.2 Dept of Voc. Ed.	12	356	32,870
1.3 Off. of Private Comm.	974	4,069	100,780
1.4 Others	5,862	29,408	662,808
2. Other organizations	22	999	118,219
Total	11,650	58,173	1,324,934

Note : 1. Semi-open university, Ramkamhaeng, is included in this group. There was approximately 100,000 students in 1980.

2. The new open universitoaity, Sukhothaithammathirat, is not included.

3. Enrollment-Population Ratio 1981

In 1981, there are approximately 24.3 million of population between 4-24 years of age, and they are considered as school-age population. The total enrollment in the same year is 10.1 million, or about 41.6 percent of school-age population when number of students by level of education are compared with number of respective school. age population, the figures are as follows :

Pre-primary (4-6 years)	= 9.2 %
Primary (7-12 years)	= 96.6 %
Lower Secondary (13-15)	= 31.1 %
Upper Secondary (16-18)	= 20.5 %
Higher Education (19-24)	= 4.4 %

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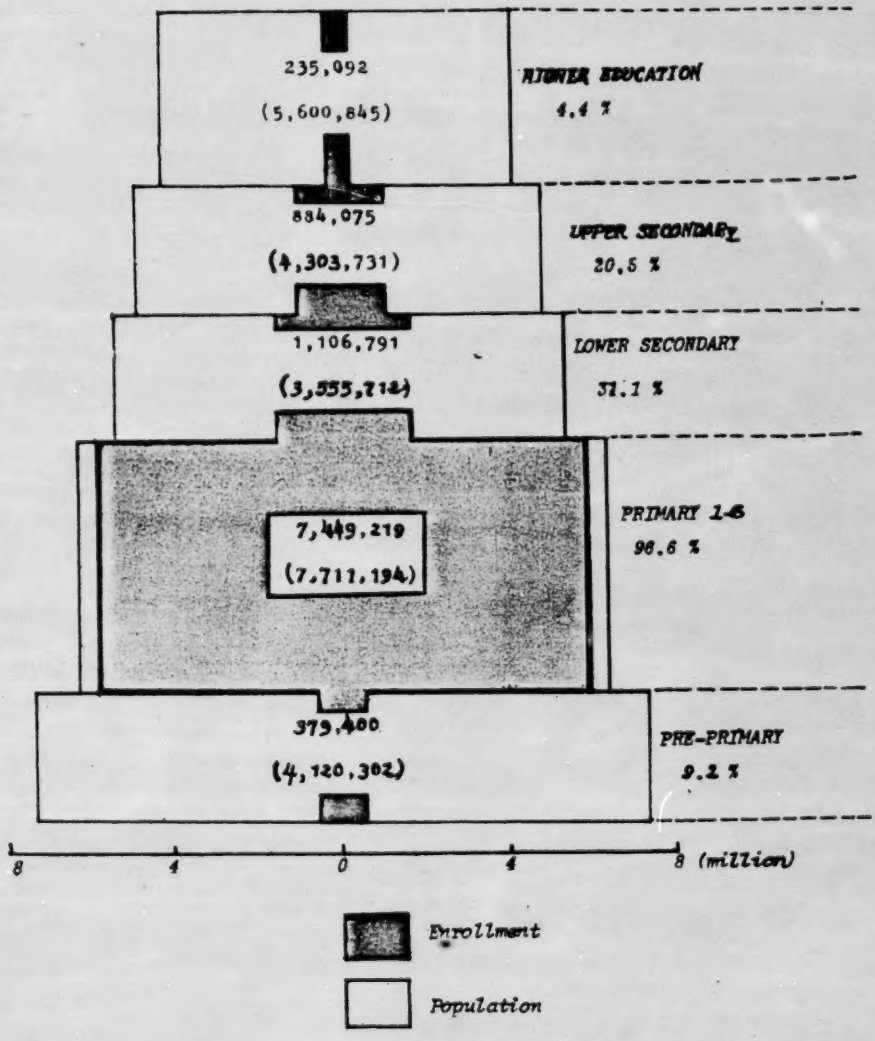
Chart V Enrollment/Population Ratio, Level of Education

1981



4. Proportion of Enrollment by Sector

The private sector shares approximately 14 percent of the enrollment in 1981. When the figure is broken down by level of education, the proportions vary considerably, ranging from 59 percent at the pre-primary, 9 percent at the primary, to 17 percent, 32 percent, and 17 percent, at the lower secondary, upper secondary, and higher education respectively.

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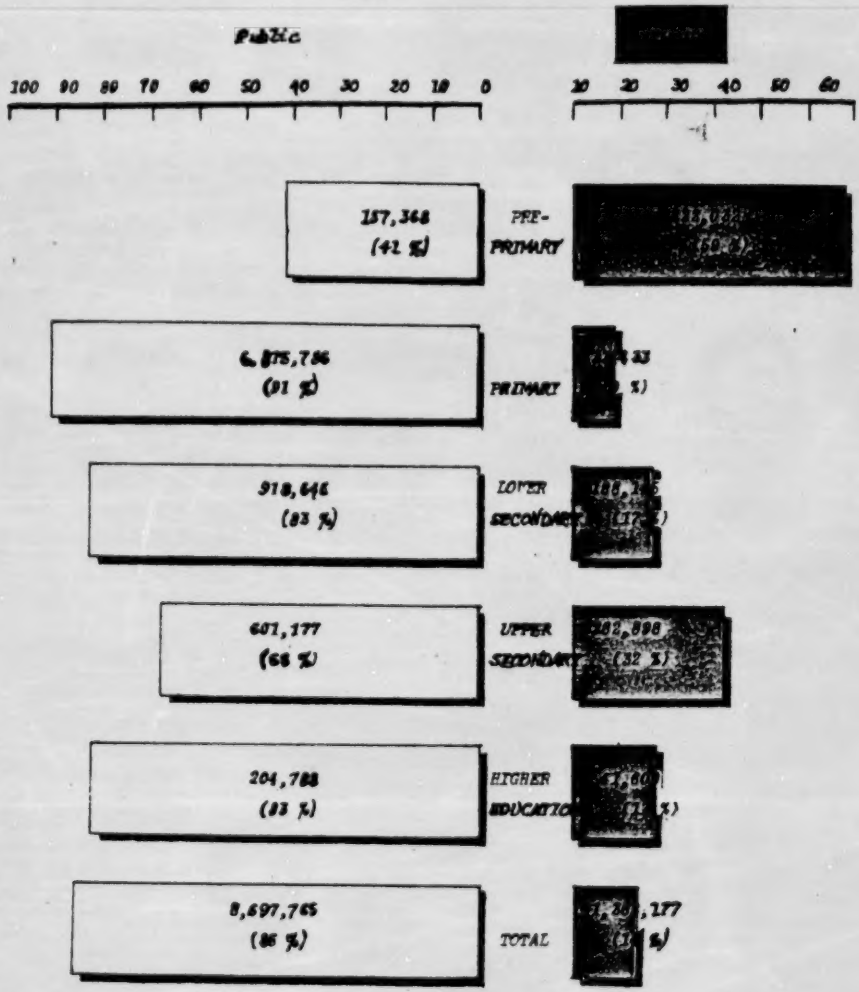
Chart VI Proportion of enrollment in Public and Private Sectors in 1981



5. Proportion of Enrollment in Bangkok and the Regions in 1981

Approximatetly 1.2 million students are enrolled in formal institutions in the Bangkok metropolitan area, while the other 8.8 million are enrolled in those located in the regions.

At the pre-primary level about 22 percent of students are in Bangkok, while the rest are in the regions.

Starting from the primary level, the proportion of students enrolled in Bangkok continue to rise, that is, 7 percent at the primary 19 percent at the lower secondary, and 27 percent and 50 percent at the upper secondary and higher education respectively.

This indicates the disproportional distrtibution of formal education institutions.

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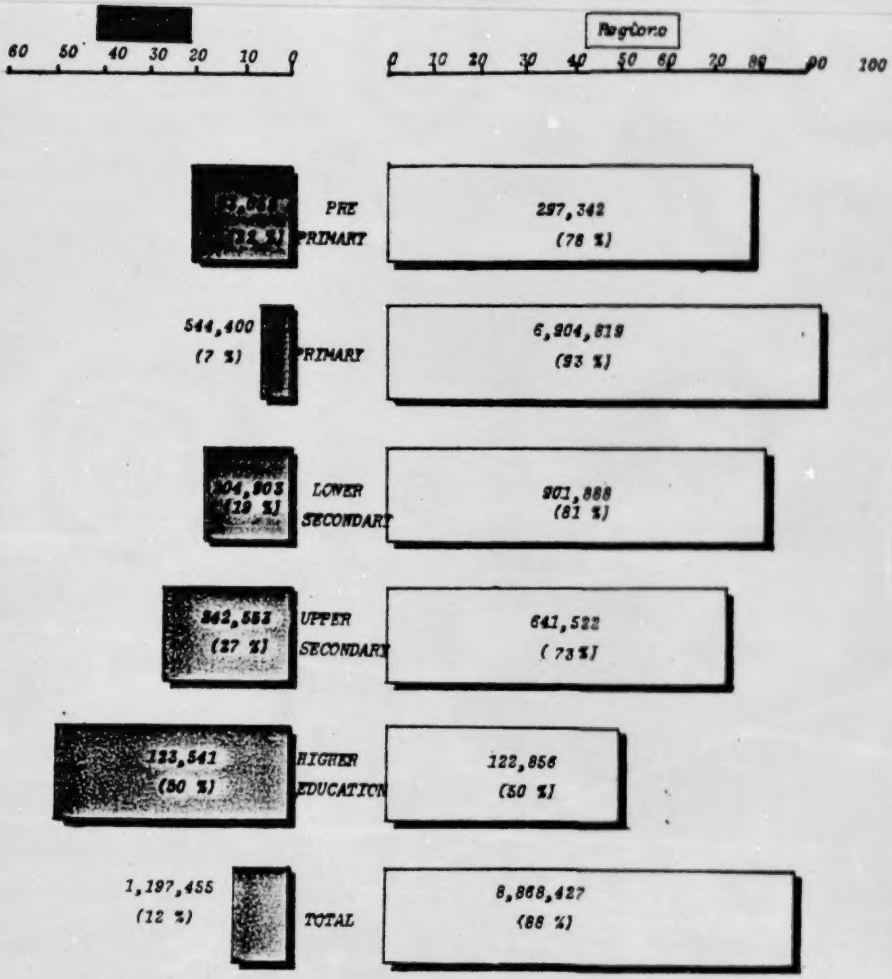
Chart VII PROPORTION OF ENROLLMENT IN THE BANGKOK METROPOLIS AND THE REGIONS IN 1981



6. Educational Budget

The Thai Goverment spends approximately one-fifth of national budget on education annually.

In the fiscal year 1982 (the Budget used for the academic year 1981), the Government allocated about 1.2 billion U.S. dollars for all levels and types of education.

Table 3 Proportion of Educational Budget 1977–1982

(million U.S. dollars)

Year	National Budget	Educational Budget	Percentage of National Budgot
1977	3,034.3	645.3	21.6
1978	3,521.7	711.2	20.2
1979	4,000.0	782.8	19.6
1980	4,980.7	1,083.6	21.8
1981	6,087.0	1,219.4	21.1
1982	7,000.0	1,418.7	20.3

Note : 1 U.S. dollar = 23 Baht

7. Distribution of Educational Budget by Organizations

As indicated in table 4, the major portion (82.7 %) of educational budget in the fiscal year 1982 was allocated for the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of University Affairs budget accounted for another 14 percent of the total amount. The rest were allocated for the National Education Commission and other government agencies involved in educational activities.

J. PROSPECT OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (1982-1986)

Starting from 1982, the Fifth Five Year Development Plan is to be implemented. The main development policies are :

1. To integrate eduational system at all levels and forms.

2. To improve quality of education.

3. To inculcate self descipline, values, moral, conscience, and responsibility.

4. To promote equality.

5. To encourage private participation.

5. To improve the structure of educational administration and management system.

7. To mobilize resources from various sources for education.

8. To improve the entrance examination (to colleges and universities) procedures.

Table 4 Ditribution of Educational Budget by Organizations 1982

(millions U.S. dollar)

Organizations	Budget	Proportion
1. Ministry of Ed.	1,174.0	82.7
2. National Education Commission	1.8	
3. Ministry of University Affairs	194.3	13.7
4. Others	48.6	3.4
Total	1,418.7	100.0